

CHALLENGE



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PRESIDENT TRUMP WILL CARRY ON OBAMA’S RACIST LEGACY

A Donald Trump presidency means a continuation of Barack Obama’s wage-killing exploitation, economic crises, racist and sexist demagoguery, persecution of immigrants, ever-widening inequality, and plans for broader inter-imperialist conflict. It can also be one of mass fightback! Communists have a vital role to play in this volatile period. Multiracial unity is our most powerful weapon. Our job is to organize the international working class to defend itself and fight back.

Trump was clearly not the first choice of the main wing of the U.S. ruling class. The finance capitalists were more comfortable with the racist, sexist Hillary Clinton, a proven general for U.S. imperialism. But the bosses are flexible and resourceful, and they’ll exert all of their power to bend Trump to their will. To maintain their dominance, protect their oil profits, and build support for the next big ground war, the bosses will move to bring workers from across the political spectrum into line. As the Council on Foreign Relations, the leading think tank for U.S. main-wing, finance capitalism, observes:

Trump may provoke lasting political realignments. On the right, this will most likely take the form of a resurgence in muscular exceptionalism, which would call Americans to unite in confronting a freedom-hating enemy (perhaps China, Iran, or Russia). Less predictable, but potentially more interesting, will be the opposition from the left. After eight years of deferring to Obama, the left now has an opportunity to get creative. For instance, left-wing Democrats (and some Republicans) may attempt to constrain the power of the executive, as occurred after World War I and the

Vietnam War, but after the war in Iraq has not.

Relative to its rivals in Russia and China, the U.S. ruling class is internally divided and in accelerating decline. The volatility around Trump’s incoming presidency makes the U.S. bosses even more vulnerable. It is too early to gauge Trump’s impact on the splits that plague the ruling class. The rulers themselves are as unsure of how to make a Trump presidency work best for them. But we can be certain that the bosses’ relentless drive for profits will intensify their attacks on the international working class.

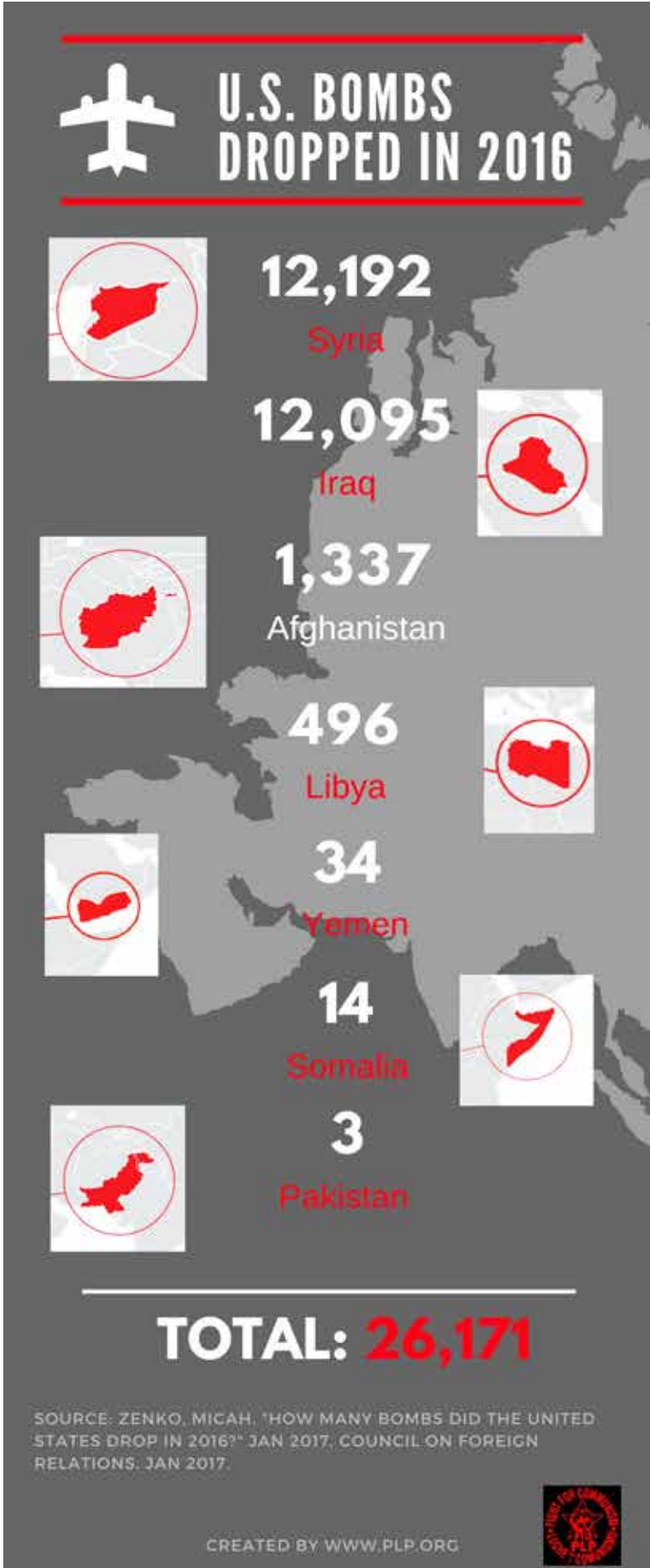
Obama’s War Legacy

Assassin-in-Chief Obama paved the road for Trump to continue wholesale killing with drones. As of January 2016, Obama had authorized more than five hundred drone strikes, killing 3,040 people labeled as terrorists and 391 civilians (New York Times, 1/12/16). Trump’s racist anti-Muslim policies were derived from Obama’s racist military attacks on the working class in the Middle East. Obama’s efforts to institutionalize and normalize the practice of drone strikes will be now be pushed by Trump.

Eight years of a Barack Obama presidency has resulted in mass deportations (a record 2.5 million through 2015), a bank bailout (\$700 billion) and rampant, racist police terror. But Obama did little to assuage the bosses’ biggest concern: the waning of patriotism among disaffected U.S. workers, and their lack of enthusiasm for a military draft for the next ground war.

The U.S. military is essential to U.S. capitalist dominance around the world. While Trump may have made isolationist-sounding campaign promises to cancel trade agreements like the Trans-

Continued on page 2



★DC

Transit Work-
ers Gear Up for
Strike, Open to
Communism
page 3

★LA

Housekeepers
Link Anti-Sexist
Fight to
Elections
page 3

★ HISTORY

Multiracial Unity
of Workers
in the U.S.
page 8

OUR FIGHT

★Progressive Labor Party (PLP) fights to destroy capitalism and the dictatorship of the capitalist class. We organize workers, soldiers and youth into a revolutionary movement for communism.

★ the dictatorship of the working class — communism — can provide a lasting solution to the disaster that is today's world for billions of people. This cannot be done through electoral politics, but requires a revolutionary movement and a mass Red Army led by PLP.

★Worldwide capitalism, in its relentless drive for profit, inevitably leads to war, fascism, poverty, disease, starvation and environmental destruction. The capitalist class, through its state power — governments, armies, police, schools and culture — maintains a dictatorship over the world's workers. The capitalist dictatorship supports, and is supported by, the anti-working-class ideologies of racism, sexism, nationalism, individualism and religion.

★While the bosses and their mouthpieces claim "communism is dead," capitalism is the real failure for billions worldwide. Capitalism returned to Russia and China because socialism retained many aspects of the profit system, like wages and privileges. Russia and China did not establish communism.

★Communism means working collectively to build a worker-run society. We will abolish work for wages, money and profits. While capitalism needs unemployment, communism needs everyone to contribute and share in society's benefits and burdens.

★Communism means abolishing racism and the concept of "race." Capitalism uses racism to super-exploit Black, Latin, Asian and indigenous workers, and to divide the entire working class.

★Communism means abolishing the special oppression of women — sexism — and divisive gender roles created by the class society.

★Communism means abolishing nations and nationalism. One international working class, one world, one Party.

★Communism means that the minds of millions of workers must become free from religion's false promises, unscientific thinking and poisonous ideology. Communism will triumph when the masses of workers can use the science of dialectical materialism to understand, analyze and change the world to meet their needs and aspirations.

★Communism means the Party leads every aspect of society. For this to work, millions of workers — eventually everyone — must become communist organizers. Join Us!

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WHO WRITES FOR CHALLENGE?

The fact that CHALLENGE/PLP articles are not signed grows from PLP's criticism of the cult of the individual in the former socialist Soviet Union and China. We do not want to encourage the possibility of building up a "following" around any particular individual.

While an article may be written by one person, the final version is based on collective discussion and criticism. Many times this collective discussion even precedes an individual's writing of an article.

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Editorial

Trump Will Continue Obama's Racist Legacy

It's NOT JUST TRUMP



IT's CAPITALISM

Continued from page 1

Pacific Partnership, or to step back from NATO and give Russia freer rein in Eastern Europe, make no mistake. Trump will be a war president. As Foreign Affairs (1/3) noted,

Trump never promised to retract the United States' global power. To the contrary, he vowed to build up the military, go after Islamist terrorism, and counter Chinese aggression. An isolationist he is not.

The Brookings Institute, another top imperialist think tank, laments Obama's decision to avoid "messy" conflicts that would require, "sizing military forces in particular for larger-scale stabilization missions. In other words, he directed the armed forces not even to retain the capability to do big things that extended beyond their warfighting comfort zones" (1/6). The report encourages Trump to correct Obama's mistake before the next war.

All Capitalists Are Our Enemies

Based on the people he's nominated to cabinet-level positions, Trump could represent an opportunity to unify the rulers' dominant section with the wing represented by more domestically oriented capitalists.

The jobs that deal directly with profits generated within the U.S. are going to allies of domestically focused bosses like Charles and David Koch. The Kochs are "well positioned to influence the Trump administration, with many allies in important cabinet and transition positions" (Times, 1/6). For example, Trump's nominee to lead the Environmental Protection Agency, Scott Pruitt, Oklahoma's attorney general, received \$175,000 from the Koch brothers' network for a non-profit Pruitt helps lead (Politico, 12/27/16).

On the other hand, Trump's appointment of Walter "Jay" Clayton to head the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission, the agency that polices and regulates Wall Street, is a clear nod to the finance capital section of the ruling class. Clayton is a lawyer who has represented mega-banks like Barclays and JPMorgan Chase. He also handled the U.S. Treasury Department's capital investment in Goldman Sachs, where his wife is a private wealth advisor. Mike Sherrod, a ranking member of the U.S. Senate Banking Committee, stated,

"It's hard to see how an attorney who's spent his career helping Wall Street beat the rap will keep President-elect Trump's promise to stop big banks and hedge funds from 'getting away with murder'" (NYT, 1/4).

The bosses will continue to use Trump's racist rhetoric to divide the working class by blaming Black and Latin workers for unlivable wages and housing conditions. The Republican Party, in particular, will use openly racist, far-right movements to deepen this divide. Meanwhile, the Democratic Party will use Trump's presidency to mislead the working class into dead-end, liberal social reform movements, while pushing the lie that voting can change capitalism.

Even as friction within the ruling class heightens, the bosses will do their best to use Trump's presidency to serve their common interest in maximum profit, and to attack the working class to that end.

Same Enemy, Same Fight

Historically, workers have fought together against their oppressors from the very inception of capitalism. Although we understand that the profit system can never be reformed to serve workers' needs, reform movements and tactics--rallies, strikes, walkouts, and local fights against racism and sexism--can be extremely valuable for our class. They build unity with our class brothers and sisters. Most important, they teach us how to fight the bosses.

Like the Obama presidency before it, Trump's presidency is hazardous to the international working class--and an opportunity for mass militancy. Since the November elections, we have seen thousands of workers hit the streets with their fists in the air, ready to fight back against capitalism. Trump's open racism can be smashed only by multiracial unity. We must continue to struggle with misled workers to fight back against the true beast. Only a multiracial mass movement for communist revolution can smash capitalism and all of its lies.

Our ultimate goal is communism. It can be realized only with mass revolutionary violence by millions of workers and youth--by people just like you. United as one class, freed from exploitation and artificial borders, the working class can build a new world from the ashes of the old. Join the Progressive Labor Party! When you do, you will be joining hands with billions of fighters past, present, and future. The world belongs to the international working class, but only if we dare to fight for it.☺

"It's hard to see how an attorney who's spent his career helping Wall Street beat the rap will

Transit Workers Gearing Up to Strike, Open to Communism

WASHINGTON, DC, January 5—The path to revolution for a communist society includes leading militant battles against racist, capitalist attacks on our class. In the Amalgamated Transportation Union Local 689, Progressive Labor Party members are struggling with their co-workers to intensify the fight against management.

A strong union strike would not only push back against management attacks, but would strengthen the working class for the many battles ahead on the road to a communist revolution. For transit workers this requires exposing how the current union leaders collaborate with management. At Metro, and all around the world, communist leadership is needed for the struggles against the bosses' attacks today, and for communism, workers' power, tomorrow. A stronger PLP organization at Metro is a step in this direction.

Progressive Labor Party joined over 100 workers and riders at a union town hall meeting. The union leadership called the meeting supposedly to resist Metro's efforts to balance its budget for the next fiscal year. The anti-working class attacks that Metro is proposing includes cutting bus and rail service, laying off workers, freezing wages, and eliminating new workers from the defined benefit pension plan. These attacks are all racist as they disproportionately affect Black workers the most. And racism weakens the working class and hurts all workers.

Politicians, Bosses, and Union Leaders Cozy Up

Some politicians spoke at the meeting to "support" our struggle, but this lie was met with much



skepticism. Malcolm Augustine, a member of the Metro Board of Directors, said he favored increasing headways (the time between runs) rather than eliminating lines. Workers told him that this proposal would also mean cutting jobs. He quickly tried to change his story.

Another worker asked him about the Board's efforts to eliminate new workers from the pension system. When he claimed he did not know about this, the local union president jumped in to defend him and his supposed ignorance, claiming the Board was not responsible for the proposals attacking the union pension system.

We got a glimpse of the way the current union leadership fawns over Metro bosses instead of taking them on!

From Rallies to Revolution, Workers Must Fight Back

The ongoing crisis of capitalism and the weakness of the labor movement have made the bosses much more determined to make these cuts. A PLP member at the meeting drove home this point. Although Metro management has proposed cuts in the past, workers and riders have fought them with partial success through rallies and mass attendance at public hearings. Today, more intense struggle is needed. We are organizing for a strike while strengthening the working class for future battles.

The union is planning a major rally at the final budget hearing at Metro Headquarters on January 30. We will be there fighting the bosses' cutbacks and building a strong, multiracial working class that builds for a communist revolution!✊

LA Housekeepers Link their Anti-Sexist Fight to Election

LOS ANGELES—The housekeepers have been organizing in secret for months. At the beginning of November they made their antisexist fight public. Just days after the presidential election of Donald Trump, they won a vote in favor of unionization, 27-15. There are many more battles to come. Most important is the lifetime struggle for a better world; a world totally run by workers, not profiteering capitalists. Let's turn every worker's struggle into a step towards communism.

As reported previously in CHALLENGE, these sexist bosses at an upscale hotel near our church have been violating labor laws for a long time. The 50 housekeepers, mainly Latin women, had to work through breaks and lunch to finish the rooms (many with balconies) that they were required to clean each day. In fact, they often had to work beyond the end of their shift with no pay.

They have been working harder than ever, especially after the hotel owners hired union-busters. They used "captive-audience meetings," where workers were told reasons they shouldn't unionize. These union-busters tried to terrorize and intimidate the workers for wanting better working conditions. Seven workers were told to attend one of these captive-audience meetings; instead twenty workers and neighborhood supporters showed up and disrupted management's plans. Later the bosses decided to trap the housekeepers by meeting with them one on one as they cleaned rooms.

During their celebration rally at City Hall be-

fore a Planning Commission meeting, the housekeepers thanked supporters and said that the community has always been supportive and they couldn't have done it without them. In reality it's the workers that inspired the resident activists, union leaders and others that had come out in support of their brave actions. They had support from other hotel workers as well, who had also gone through labor disputes in the past. One of the workers from another hotel said that the neighborhood residents give massive support to the workers and just wished more workers at the surrounding hotels were as bold and showed this kind of solidarity.

Instead of feeling powerless after Trump's election, one of the workers said, "With Trump being elected president, we felt we urgently needed to become a union to stand up for immigrant workers under attack."

Another said, "Actions are more powerful than words."

We can learn from the solidarity and bold actions of these hotel workers when we fight racism and sexism. We all must be organized and become engaged in class struggles, such as this one or against racist police violence that has been an ongoing struggle throughout the globe. We, as workers, need to support one another. In order to defeat sexism, racism and all the ills of capitalism, we must move our friends, family, church members, co-workers, and students to support these fightbacks because the bosses aren't going to



give up that easily. We must prepare ourselves for larger fights to come, as the housekeepers fight for their contract and other workers in the hotel fight to join the union as well. But we must never forget that "It's the whole damn system." The bosses will do everything in their power to continue to exploit workers in order to increase their profits. We must do everything in our power to build anti-racist, anti-sexist, working-class unity. Join the revolutionary communist Progressive Labor Party and organize for a better world. Power to the workers!✊

Creation of Race

How The U.S. Created Race & Racism to Divide the Working Class

“Fork by fork, step by step, option by option, America or, to be more precise, the men who spoke in the name of America decided that it was going to be a white place defined negatively by the bodies and the blood of the reds and the blacks. And that decision, which was made in the 1660s and elaborated over a two-hundred-year period, foreclosed certain possibilities in America—perhaps forever—and set off depth charges that are still echoing and re-echoing in the commonwealth. What makes this all the more mournful is that it didn’t have to happen that way. There was another road -- but that road wasn’t taken. In the beginning, as we have seen, there was no race problem in America. The race problem in America was a deliberate invention of men who systematically separated blacks and whites in order to make money.”

—“The Road Not Taken,” Lerone Bennett (1970)

The Body of Liberties, 1641: Massachusetts becomes the first colony to legalize slavery. This is done through the passage of the Body of Liberties. Under section 91 the article clearly sanctioned slavery - and creates three categories of workers: Native Americans (Reds), white people under the system of indenture, and Blacks.

Bacon’s Rebellion, 1676: Stricter slave codes emerged in Virginia after Bacon’s Rebellion in 1676, when wealthy planters decided to abolish indentured servitude and establish permanent slavery for Africans, fearing that class conflict would undermine their tobacco plantation holdings. Also in 1676, a law was enacted that prohibited free blacks from having white servants.

The Indian Removal Act, 1830: Signed into law by Andrew Jackson, The Removal Act paved the way for the forced expulsion of tens of thousands of American Indians from their traditional homelands to the West, an event widely known as the “Trail of Tears,” a forced resettlement of the native population.

Salem Massachusetts, 1645: Emanuel Downing writes to his brother-in-law about a scheme to trade captured Native Americans for Africans, claiming that the Puritans can maintain “20 Moors cheaper than one English servant.”

Virginia General Assembly, 1691: Any white person married to a “black or mulatto” was banished and a systematic plan was established to capture “outlying slaves.”

The Foreign Miners Tax, 1850: The California legislature passes the Foreign Miners Tax, which requires Chinese and Latin American gold miners to pay a special tax on their holdings, a tax not required of European American miners.

The Body of Liberties, 1662: The Bodies of Liberties was amended to include the enslavement of a slave woman’s offspring to be a legal slave. This guaranteed that offspring of all slaves were considered as the same legal status as their mother, a slave.

The Negro Act, 1740: The comprehensive Negro Act of 1740 passed in South Carolina made it illegal for slaves to move abroad, assemble in groups, raise food, earn money, and learn to write English. Additionally, owners were permitted to kill rebellious slaves if necessary.

The Fugitive Slave Act, 1850: Passed by Congress in 1850, the Fugitive Slave Act required that all escaped slaves were, upon capture, to be returned to their masters and that officials and citizens of free states had to cooperate in this law enlisting the assistance of other whites. The act also made it possible for a black person to be captured as a slave solely on the sworn statement of a white person with no right to challenge the claim in court.

The Royal African Company, 1672: The British Parliament chartered the Royal African Company (RAC). This company would have a monopoly on the slave trade between Africa and America. All slaves were to be brought to America only through this company.

The Naturalization Act of 1790: Alternately known as the Nationality Act, this act restricted citizenship to “any alien, being a free white person” who had been in the U.S. for two years. In effect, it left out indentured servants, slaves, and most women.

History of Multiracial Unity

Continued from page 8

Hidden History of Multiracial Fightback

There are many more examples of how as the U.S. bosses turned the screws of their terror, intensified segregation and enforcement of race-based laws, Black and white workers resisted., From the multiracial New Orleans General Strike of 1892, to the several decades of armed struggle between workers and the bosses’ militias and police from the 1880s to the 1920s from Virginia to Colorado, white workers have shared writing our class’ history, in blood, alongside Black and immigrant workers.

One especially notable multiracial armed uprising of coal miners in 1921, West Virginia, known as the Battle of Blair Mountain (*see box for one of its lasting consequences*). It was defeated in what became the U.S. Army’s largest engagement within U.S. borders since the Civil War. During the battle, striking white workers, partly inspired by the Soviet Union, joined with Black and immigrant workers sent to break the strike. They effectively created created a workers’ army 13,000 strong (immortalized in the 1987 pro-worker film *Matewan*).

The U.S. bosses, determined to crush armed insurrection, deployed planes armed with gas and bombs left over from World War I, some of which were captured by the workers’ army.

Red-Led Workers Fight Like Hell

The rise of the communist movement provided our class with a template for a new world—and nearly one century ago, a revolution in the Russian Empire led by the Bolsheviks (communists) who comprised many languages and ethnic groups seized power over one-sixth of the earth’s surface.

What’s In a Name?

The derogatory terms for white workers are examples of the bosses’ attempts to rewrite history and scapegoat them for capitalism’s problems.

The white workers, indicating their pro-working class politics over the bosses’ racism, wore red bandanas around their necks, earning the insult “redneck” by the capitalist media (Appalachian Magazine, 5/23/16). While some evidence suggests the term “redneck” existed as local slang prior, the bosses’ media ushered the term into mainstream use as an insult during and after the Battle of Blair Mountain.

After Blair Mountain, “redneck” became, in dictionaries and media, obscured and synonymous with “cracker” and “hillbilly.” “Cracker” was originally, a child of a convict). “Hillbilly” was originally, extremely poor, often interracial, whites living in the Appalachian mountains and outside the norms of southern society.

By the 1930s in the U.S., the communist-led mass multiracial organizing of the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO) was openly joining Black and white workers, north and south, side by side into struggle.

Seizing power for communism will mean combating the bosses’ ideas and ultimately the bosses’ state. There is a growing base of racism in the U.S., but this truth is buried under capitalist anti-working class propaganda that paints all white workers with the same brush. Dismissing all white workers as racists deprives all workers of unity with, and learning from, their class sisters and brothers worldwide.

This is nothing new. Capitalists have always blamed the working class for the problems created by capitalism. Black workers, especially Black women, have particularly been singled out worldwide for capitalism’s worst racist and sexist devastation.

The ruling class of the U.S. is the world’s top global imperialist power. Its trillions of dollars worth of investments straddle the globe from the Middle East, to sub-Saharan Africa to Latin America.

PLP carries on this legacy of multiracial unity. With the sharpening attacks on the international working class and growing threat of all out inter-imperialist wars looming, our understanding of history is more important than ever as workers from every part of the working class seek out answers that only a new international communist movement can provide.☸

Women’s March:

To Defeat Sexism,
Fight for Communism

The Million Women March, which was initially organized by all white women, on January 21 aims to respond to president Donald Trump’s sexism. (The first Million Woman March was in 1997 in Philadelphia, organized by Black women, and around feminist Black nationalist politics).

The fight against the rising tide of fascism must go beyond marching in Washington for a day. Join with Progressive Labor Party to build a movement to fight for communism and get rid of capitalism at the root of this sexist, racist system.

As attacks on the working class worldwide worsen, we must take the energy we see in the many, many people who want to do something, and fight back. We must be in our neighborhoods, schools, and workplaces and take on the unequal schools, the racism of the police and the sexist exploitation of women workers.

Trump’s election is a symptom of a system that is failing on a massive scale. The racism and sexism that Trump has heralded on his way to the White House is not new. The deportations, racist murders by killer cops, attacks on women workers, segregation across neighborhoods and schools and an onslaught on our wages have been carried out by both political parties at the behest of the biggest capitalists regardless of who was in the White House.

All of the reasons we hate Trump, the racism and sexism are inseparable from capitalism. Those rotten ideas are deeply rooted in the bosses dividing the working class to keep people oppressed.

Clinton would’ve been
Sexist-in-Chief

Many lament the “loss” of a woman president, falsely calling it a set back from women. Hillary Clinton, along with her husband Bill, has over two decades of experience in fronting for the capitalist bosses’ war on the international working class for two decades.

She was an especially vocal advocate for the sexist, racist welfare reform that threw millions of people—disproportionately Black mothers and children—into extreme poverty. Hillary Clinton also backed the 1994 crime bill, including the “three strikes” rule, that paved the way for mass racist incarceration and expanded the prison industrial complex for privatized slave labor.

Through sanctions and indiscriminate bombings of Iraq, the Clintons slaughtered 500,000 Iraqi children.

As U.S. senator, Hillary Clinton enthusiastically backed the invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq to shore up U.S. control over Middle Eastern oil, killing hundreds of thousands more civilians in the process. As Barack Obama’s Secretary of State, she took a lead role in engineering attacks on civilians in Libya and the coup in Honduras that helped make it the murder capital of the world. Afterward, she was leading the charge for a more aggressive U.S. intervention in Syria, a conflict that has murdered hundreds of thousands and left millions displaced.

By no means would a woman presidency been a victory for the working class. Clinton’s history has proven her dedication to attacking working-class women and their families worldwide. Fighting sexism can only come from a united multiracial effort by working-class women and men. No allegiance to any section of the ruling class, regardless of their race or gender. These are pro-capitalist ideas, and have no place in a fight for an egalitarian communist world.

Democrats on Code Blue

The Democratic Party is hoping that the Women’s March will resuscitate their party, but building up the Democrats will only keep us on the same path we’ve been on: more racism, more sexism and more wars for oil and power. Even as so many are marching for justice and against racism and sexism, the bosses want to use our energy and fighting spirit in their depraved wars for profit. The New York Times, a big Trump opponent and supporter of the Democratic Party just called for a military draft (1/7), cynically using the guise of “service” as a pretext to send women and men across the globe to kill our working class sisters and brothers who live in other countries.

We will be able to free ourselves from the capitalists when we realize that we don’t need them to run society. The battles against the attacks on the working class are both about fighting for our survival and learning to free ourselves. Join us, the Progressive Labor Party, in the fight to build a society based on the needs of the masses of the world, and not of exploitation.🌐

Barack
Obama



OBJECTIVE

Utilize my experience and commitment to U.S. capitalism and imperialism to maintain the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie over the working class.



Presidential Accomplishments

DOMESTIC POLICY

Bailouts:
Banks = **\$16.8 trillion**
Auto = **\$80 billion**
Insurance Co.s = **\$15 billion**

Education:
Increased racist segregation of schools. **Three-fourths** of both Black and Latin young people attend segregated schools where most of their classmates qualified as low-income.

Police Murder:
Signed 'Blue Alert' law to protect police as **4,124** workers were murdered by police from 2013-16 including: Mike Brown, Shantel Davis, Eric Garner, Sandra Bland, Tyrone West, and Jessica Williams.

Cutbacks:
Cut food stamp benefits by **\$8.7 billion**, even though **22 percent of children** in the U.S. live below the poverty line.

Deportations:
Deported **2.4 million workers** between 2009 and 2014 from the U.S., more than any president in history.

FOREIGN POLICY

War:
Conducted covert operations in over **75 countries**. Bombed **7 countries**: Iraq, Afghanistan, Syria, Libya, Somalia, Yemen, and Pakistan.

Drone Program:
As of November 24, 2014 ordered U.S. drones, which killed a low estimate of **1,147** up to **98 percent** of those killed are innocent men, women, and children.

Pivot to Asia:
Developed the U.S. strategy to concentrate military forces in the Pacific to prepare for future bigger imperialist wars with China.

Israel:
Supported Israeli bosses, the watchdog for U.S. imperialism in the Middle East, with a record breaking **\$38 billion in military aid** to continue the racist slaughter of Palestinian and Arab workers.

Latin America:
Supported 2009 military coup in Honduras, and continued to destabilize Venezuela, Bolivia, Ecuador, and Haiti.

Ukraine:
Gave money and military aid to the notorious **neo-Nazi ‘Azov’ battalion** to counter Russian imperialism in Europe.

CREATED BY: PLP.ORG

LETTERS

We encourage all CHALLENGE readers to send in letters and articles about their experiences fighting the bosses worldwide.

Transit Workers Disrupt Bosses' Townhall Agenda

Effort, boldness and militancy can move workers. I saw this at the Town Hall meeting held by the D.C. transit union in Washington DC. The discussion was how to fight cutbacks at Metro, including the loss of 1000 positions and some bus routes vital to workers who ride the bus to get to work.

The meeting was geared to listening to politicians and union leaders, but rank and file workers disrupted this plan. One called for a tax on corporations and developers to get them to pay their fair share, since they make so much money from the subway's accessibility to their businesses. Applause rang out! Another challenged the Board of Directors member as not caring about workers' lives, and the union president responded by threatening to throw him out of the meeting. But the woman sitting next to me wanted to hear more from him, and so I got her a copy of CHALLENGE and we exchanged contact information.

Another transit worker challenged the leadership around management's threat to pensions, and got a good response from the riders and workers there—but not from the bosses! That's a good thing.

The struggle is heating up. Over 45 people took copies of Challenge to read, four contacts were made, and three of them (including a transit worker) followed up with me right away.

Is quantity turning into quality, as dialectics teaches? I think we may be on the verge of something! Intensify the struggle, comrades and friends!

★★★★★

Workers Commemorate Mao and Workers' Power

The recent CHALLENGE article commemorating the Cultural Revolution correctly points out the error of building a cult of personality around Mao Tse Tung and his role in the GPCR. However, the article left out that Mao did many good things and played a leading role in the Chinese Revolution, an event that helped inspire the formation of PLP.

For many people in China, Mao is synonymous with the communist movement there. A 12/28 article in the Global Times describes how the Chinese working class still associates Mao with workers power and the advances gained through the Chinese revolution and GPCR that have now been lost with the return of capitalism.



It was September, and I was in the Mao Zedong Bronze Statue Square in Shaoshan, Mao's birthplace, to cover the 40th anniversary of his death. Before I arrived, I was expecting a sad, solemn occasion on the square, which is traditionally used by Maoists as an open-air memorial during his anniversaries. And yet in reality, it was more like a throwback to the days of his leadership, with a lot enthusiasm and noise.

Many people who came to commemorate Mao are farmers and workers, people who feel left behind by the rapid economic growth that followed the reform and opening-up. This is why there were a lot of rural elements displayed on this day of mourning.

★★★★★

Response: Criticism of the Black Nationalism Forum

An article in the January 11 issue, about a forum debating multiracial unity versus Black nationalism, requires clarification. Two banners were described, one saying "Black Lives Matter," an attempt at an antiracist statement, and the other saying "Blue Lives Matter," meaning cops, which is an openly racist response to the first banner. While the latter is openly racist and against the interests of the working class as a whole (both Black and white, as well as Latin, etc.), the former is similarly bad, albeit more subtle – bad for reasons mentioned elsewhere in the article and outlined below.

One panelist is "a young Black man" from Black Lives Matter, enraged at the murders of Eric Garner, Mike Brown, and Trayvon Martin. But the article doesn't say that his response (joining BLM) is further divisive of our class. While Black nationalism may appear, and be intended as, antiracist, it reinforces divisions in the working class, making it a handmaiden to racism.

A second panelist is described as a man who mentors Black students to promote their "good" behavior, in an attempt to lessen their victimization by racism. While it says he realizes that "bad" behaviors are not their fault, the article remains silent on PLP's understanding that his practice unwittingly blames the victims' behavior for their oppression, rather than capitalism's racist assaults on their lives. This blame-the-victim approach, common to people like Cosby and Obama, is another form of racism that renders the victims blind to the need to fight that oppression rather than change their behavior to fit the capitalist's idea of what is proper.

While distinguishing between the Black Lives Matter movement's intended antiracism and its actual divisiveness, the article fails to say that the latter is primary, and why. Then it mentions "white privilege theory" without explaining it and why it is false. It asserts that white workers are privileged, but to claim that any workers are privileged, by being less intensely exploited/oppressed, is like saying that slaves forced to work only 12 hours a day are privileged not to have to work 14, like the rest. Wage slaves and chattel slaves share the common interest in overthrowing our exploiters/oppressors, making us all a "privileged" free class.

★★★★★

Post Election

PLP in Worcester Fights Fascism

WORCESTER, MA—After fascist Donald Trump was elected president, the Progressive Labor Party (PLP) joined with others to rally against racism and oppression. PLP passed out flyers calling for communism as the solution to the racist, impoverishing, and fascist profit system. People were eager to read CHALLENGE, some for the first time.

Five hundred people rallied and marched in the streets of Worcester. Previously in 2015, the City government had maliciously prosecuted Black Lives Matter protesters for blocking the streets of Worcester. This time, faced with many more anti-fascist protesters, the City backed down and there were no arrests.

We followed our actions in the streets with a showing of the anti racist documentary "Profiled" at a youth group. We discussed how capitalism is the root cause of racism, profiling, and impoverishment. It's great to protest against Trump, but we should all commit to a lifetime of struggle for a better world. That's communism where racism and sexism are illegal and the working class runs all aspects of society.

Fighting Local Racists's Petition

PLP and other groups were right back in the streets protesting a meeting of racists called by a long time racist, fascist and a Trump supporter. This man tried to build a fascist movement by petitioning the City Council to create a list of immigrants who had criminal records. Under pressure by antiracists and the threat of more demonstrations, the City backed down from con-



sidering the petition.

Preparing for more fascist oppression, PLP and others organized a multiracial group based on the principles of mass actions against fascism. There are some groups that are mistakenly organizing only along racial lines. This divides the working class and weakens our ability to fight back. Some do not see the necessity of mass, militant action. They want to appeal to liberal politicians with peaceful appeals such as voting or petitioning. That's not enough. Eventually the whole capitalist system has to go, so we have to learn how to fight

back militantly now.

We are building a strong base to oppose hate crimes, racist deportations, and any Muslim registry. This foundation must be the core for a society based on communist relations.

On January 21, the Progressive Labor Party, the Massachusetts Human Rights Committee, and others will rally against the inauguration of Trump in Washington, DC. The PLP in this area will also rally. We shall march in the streets and advance humankind closer to a better world. Fight for communism.🌐

Post-Election Dinner Sparks Evaluation of Old Communist Movement

NEWARK, NJ—Over 24 members and friends of the Progressive Labor Party discussed the state of the world after the election of Donald Trump. As they began to fill the apartment and prepare dishes, discussions already started about the presidency. The event was a display of multiracial and multigenerational unity ready to fight back in 2017.

What was to be an evening of entertainment and discussions around the presidency turned into an analysis of the old communist movement and what it will take to lead the working class to communist revolution.

Skit Shows Challenges of Overcoming Bad Ideas

Two comrades initiated the discussion by presenting a skit to show what some workers are thinking concerning elections. Whether it is the belief that we can find the “best candidate” or in the belief that white workers can’t be trusted, these are ideas held by people close to PLP and who at times fight alongside us. The skit showed how PL’s views contrasted with these workers.

The skit set the stage for us to always struggle against these ideas, even when we are in the minority. Through building personal relationships and engaging in class struggle, these words really do start to take form. The ideas are not empty rhetoric, but a political line that will lead us to revolution.

What Happened to the Old Movement?

After the skit, we aimed to analyze the historical process that brought Trump to the presidency and its implications for the working class. There was talk about the growing racism and sexism, which are endemic to capitalism. From attacks on immigrants and Muslims to future defunding of women’s health services like Planned Parenthood, it is clear we have a fight on our hands.

Trump is inheriting a war and deportation machine. Currently involved in wars in Africa, the Middle East, and Central Asia as well as expanding the surveillance state and deportation machine, The Obama administration has done most of the legwork for Trump to carry out his campaign promises (see page 4).

Then, a friend raised the million-dollar question, “What happened to the old communist movement? Why did they fail?”

Whether it was the maintaining of the wage system, the line of “revolutionary nationalism” (essentially allying with one set of bosses that look like us) or uniting with the “better capitalists” in the popular front theory of World War II, the old communist movement gave us a lot of lessons for the future.

Perhaps the failure of the old movement can be summed in three words: lack of confidence. A communist movement is as strong as its relationship with the working class. The following is an excerpt from Road to Revolution III, PLP’s analysis of the failure of the Chinese Revolution:

Only the workers have the power and understanding to win and secure state power. We must involve millions in the Marxist-Leninist process. History has taught us the bitter lesson that a party can grow, can lead struggles, and even hold power temporarily. But it will lose out if millions upon millions of workers aren’t imbued with communist consciousness, and take part in the political planning and direction of the Party. We reject reliance on the ruling class—any section of it.

We rely only on workers all over the world. The working class is one international class with the need to crush each section of the international bourgeoisie until the entire ruling class is finished. This is not a bookkeeper’s approach. It is an approach which demands the unity of all workers at the highest level. It calls upon all workers to be won to Marxism-Leninism.

While we weren’t able to completely cover them, PLP explained that with all of these errors, this was the first time millions worldwide were fighting to get rid of human exploitation. We have much to learn from our predecessors.

Capitalism Decaying, yet Alive

A comrade also spoke about capitalism’s ability to stay alive throughout the period when pro-communist ideas touched virtually every corner of the earth. Through depression and wars, the bosses found a way to stay alive. This is not to say that our fight is futile; we shouldn’t underestimate the flexibility of the rulers. At the same time, the working class will win once we shed ourselves of capitalist illusions.

Another friend asked about a visible weakness of our social—a lack of students. PLers accepted our friends’ challenge to ensure we work harder to include more students.

We also had a discussion about some of the challenges in organizing young people. Like many workers, young people are also held back by illusions, particularly the belief that workers can’t run the world. However, our Party has had relative success in embedding ourselves in high schools, and reaching students that way, some of whom grow up to become communist leaders in their workplaces.

Building a Base Leads to Growth

The contributions by friends of the Party illustrated the importance of keeping ties to the working class. They were the ones who put the questions of communism front and center and struggled with us to continue to work and recruit more young people to the Party. Taking leadership from the masses, and winning them to communist consciousness and organizing is key. Hopefully they too will join the Party and take on the responsibility of organizing millions to fight for communism.✪

RED EYE ON THE NEWS . . .

Below are excerpts from mainstream newspapers that may be of use for our readers. Abbreviations: NYT=New York Times, GW=Guardian Weekly, LAT=Los Angeles Times

Bangladesh: garment workers shut down plants

GW, 1/6/16 — At least 1,500 workers have been sacked from Bangladesh garment factories after protests forced a week-long shutdown at dozens of sites supplying top European and U.S. brands.

Tens of thousands of workers walked out of factories last month in the manufacturing hub of Ashulia, which make clothes for top western brands such as Gap, Zara and H&M. The protests were sparked by the sacking of 121 workers, but soon evolved into a demand for trebling of workers’ pay from the monthly minimum of...\$67. More than 50 factories were closed...to try to contain the protests, which escalated after police fired rubber bullets that injured 10 demonstrators....

Police said the protests were illegal and they had arrested 30 workers, including seven union leaders....

The monthly minimum wage for Bangladeshi textile workers was raised in 2013 after the collapse of the Rana Plaza, which killed 1,134 people. But it remains one of the lowest wages in the world, less than a fifth of what the campaigners estimate to be the country’s living wage.

The Bangladesh Garment and Industrial Workers Federation said the number of sacked workers was...3,500, with dozens of labor organizers forced into hiding....Authorities had suppressed the protests by using a wartime-era law intended to deal with threats to state security.

Judges prosecute Black defendants twice as much as whites

NYT, 12/18/16 — ...criminal courts sentence black defendants more harshly than whites....A striking new investigation...in Florida by the Sarasota Herald-Trib-

une....exposes the fact that African-American(s)... get...sometimes twice the prison terms of whites with identical criminal histories when they commit the same crimes under identical circumstances....[showing]...how bias...of individual judges and prosecutors drives sentencing inequity....

...The Herald-Tribune found that judges... sentence black defendants to longer prison terms in 60 percent of felony cases, 68 percent of...first-degree crimes and 48 percent of burglaries....

[In] The war on drugs...police target people into a court system where judges are demonstrably harder on black offenders. The report found that nearly half of the counties in Florida sentenced African-Americans convicted of felony drug possession to more than double the jail time of whites — even when their backgrounds were the same....

The Florida system is inflicting a form of racial persecution....strongly reminiscent of the Jim Crow era.

New black lung strain still killing U.S. coal miners

NYT, 12/24/16 — Appalachian health officials report a shocking rise in cases of black lung — the deadly coal-mining disease thought to have been reined in by a...federal law passed in 1969. Young miners are proving particularly vulnerable because the thinning coal seams now being worked in Appalachia leave them vulnerable to a more volatile black lung strain rooted in silica dust....

The emergence of a new generation of miners gasping for their lives....confirm a resurgence of the disease in a virulent form call progressive massive fibrosis (P.M.F.). The...study confirmed 962 cases of P.M.F. in the past decade. This month...a small Kentucky clinic [reported] 60 cases....Before [that]...report...officials had counted...only 99 cases nationally in the last five years....

Officials concede that hundreds of additional cases go unreported because X-ray testing is offered only to



working miners who volunteer. They hesitate to take part, fearing they will lose their jobs because mining companies resent having to pay years of health costs once black lung is diagnosed.

U.S., Britain created ‘hell on earth’ in Iraq

GW, 11/25/16 — [In] the destruction of...Iraq... there is no beating around the bush. Nothing in the history of this benighted region, no brutal king, no imperial satrap, no Ba’athist rogue, initiated anything as horrific as what came in the train of George W. Bush’s 2003 invasion of Iraq. By deliberately destroying order and government...and sowing chaos, the American and British invaders created a hell on Earth....

In the name of “western values,” hundreds of thousands have been killed and millions driven from their homes....

...Never forget that it was a craving to impose “western values” on Iraq that caused this disaster.

THE UNTOLD WORKERS' HISTORY

MULTIRACIAL UNITY

In the aftermath of the 2016 U.S. presidential election, major capitalist media outlets immediately blamed the working class, particularly white workers, for Donald Trump's victory. It is a given in the U.S. that many workers—Black, white, Latin and others—are angry. That white workers are somehow responsible for a Nazi like Trump is ruling class nonsense.

The history of white workers is intimately bound in common struggle with Black and immigrant workers since the U.S. was a British colony. The bosses' lies represent sharpening capitalist efforts to alienate Black, Latin, Muslim and immigrant workers, those hardest hit by racism, from their white working class sisters and brothers. While the bosses write working-class politics out of history, CHALLENGE strives to preserve and commemorate the long tradition of the all-necessary force of multiracial unity of our class.

The communist Progressive Labor Party fights back against capitalism across the globe for revolution for a communist world, where the international working class runs society. Part of our fight is dispelling the anti-working class lies spun by the bosses about one or another sector of the working class. The capitalists hate and fear communism with good reason—it means an end to their money, their borders, their empires, their racist and sexist ideas, and their class.

Trump: Creature of Capitalism

Donald Trump is rightfully hated by hundreds of millions of workers around the globe, and by masses of workers, Black and white, in the U.S. Donald Trump, however, is no more than a servant of the U.S. capitalist class. The capitalist controlled media, instead of analyzing the class nature of Trump's presidency, has settled on finger pointing at the white working class.

"Call [the U.S. presidential election] the triumph of angry white men everywhere...The only thing that can be said for certain is that angry white men are now dominant" (Huffington Post, 11/9/16).

Or as former U.S. president Bill Clinton explained, "Trump doesn't know much. One thing he knows is how to get angry, white men to vote for him" (Politico, 12/19/16).

While Trump's brand of open racism and sexism represent a lethal danger to the international working class, white workers are not to "blame" for Trump's election. Capitalism created Trump, or specifically, laid the groundwork for the rise of open racism and sexism he could exploit. Trump is merely the latest in line to serve U.S. imperialism, whose history of creating racism and racist divisions within the working class dates back to the founding of the country.

Racism: Capitalism's Greatest Weapon and Weakness

"Before Jim Crow, before the invention of the Negro or the white man or the words and concepts to describe them, the [U.S.] Colonial population consisted largely of a great mass of white and black bondsmen, who occupied roughly the same economic category and were treated with equal contempt by the lords of the plantations and legislatures...They conspired together and waged a common struggle against their common enemy -- the big planter apparatus and a social system that legalized terror against black and white bondsmen."

—"The Road Not Taken" Lerone Bennett

Lubbers, clay-eaters, rubbish—these were the words and raw imagery used to describe the masses of workers, many of them children, arriving from Europe to the British colonies in North America in the 15-1600s. The promotion of America as a land of opportunity was in stark contrast to its reality as a sink hole of oppression for Europe's displaced labor force, and growing African slave population. However, as Bennett notes above, the "color line" between white and Black took time to create.

The development of capitalism in the U.S. coincided with genocide against the largely defiant indigenous population and laws defining color line among its labor force throughout the 1600s. This hastened after a major rebellion by a wealthy English planter in 1676. Known as Bacon's Rebellion, over one thousand enslaved Black and indentured white labor (bound by bond contracts to the same bosses) burned Britain's colonial capital, Jamestown, Virginia, to the ground. The multiracial rebellion took years to defeat, and terrified the local colonial bosses. This led to the Virginia Slave Codes of 1705, the first laws enforcing a legal divide between slaves and indentured servants (see page 4).

Black chattel slavery exploited by the U.S. capitalists enabled the country, over time, to emerge as an industrial power. In the meantime, the working class showed no signs of stopping resistance. What follows are some examples from U.S. history, by no means complete, of how the history of white workers is inseparable from every other sector of the working class.

Racism Hurts All Workers

Immigration to the U.S. continued unabated throughout the 1800s. The southern slave states grew in wealth and power, as did northern industry. The first labor unions, formed in the northeast in the 1790s, struggled to negotiate with employers while in nearby Maryland, Black slaves were

driven to exhaustion for the same work with no pay.

With the victory of the Haitian Revolution in 1804, nightmares of Bacon's Rebellion haunted the rulers of the new United States. Then-president Thomas Jefferson, famed author of the U.S. Declaration of Independence, shared the slaveholders' fears that rebellion could spread via trade with Haiti. As Jefferson blockaded weapons shipments to Haiti, he cracked down on white workers. For the first time, in 1805, unions organized by shoemakers in Philadelphia were indicted as foreign conspiracies against the government, a tactic the bosses learned to love (*Labor's Untold Story*, Richard O. Boyer).

By 1846, the New England Workingmen's Association, organized by women and men mill workers of European descent, resolved: "American slavery must be uprooted before the elevation sought by the laboring classes can be affected" (Boyer). Others sought more radical means, while, in the meantime, hundreds of recorded slave rebellions, large and small, rocked the U.S.

Workers Enlist in Civil War

In 1859, a white abolitionist, John Brown, led a multiracial band of 22 men in an attempt to capture a federal arsenal in Virginia, at Harper's Ferry. Their failure to end slavery by arming freed slaves and waging guerrilla warfare, however, made John Brown's raid a rallying cry. During the U.S. Civil War that followed, between 500-750,000 northern industrial workers enlisted in the army. The first company of soldiers mobilized to defend Washington, DC, was an entire union local of textile workers from Massachusetts.

Trade unions enlisted unanimously in this way, many ceasing to exist for the duration of the war. Companies of the workers of the Illinois Miners' Union and Brooklyn Painters' Union resolved to smash "the slaveholders' conspiracy" (Boyer). Masses of Irish, German, Polish and Italian veterans of revolutions in Europe, Jewish workers, English miners and deported trade unionists, and more than 40,000 Canadians, were the among the first regiments to enter the war and scored important victories.

By no means were all white workers committed antiracists. In 1863, the same week the first all-Black regiment of the war, the 54th, saw action alongside white regiments, lynchings and race rioting of the New York Draft Riots occurred. These riots indicate the extent to the danger that all workers, if not organized around class politics and fighting back, can be won to racism.

Continued on page 4

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